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IN THE COURT OF APPEAL OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOURTH APPELLATE DISTRICT

DIVISION THREE

THE PEOPLE,

Plaintiff and Respondent,

v.

MIGUEL RUIZ, JR.,

Defendant and Appellant.

G058592

(Super. Ct. No. C86599)

O P I N I O N

Appeal from a postjudgment order of the Superior Court of Orange County,  
Lance Jensen, Judge. Reversed and remanded.

Donna L. Harris, under appointment by the Court of Appeal, for Defendant  
and Appellant.

No appearance for Plaintiff and Respondent.

\* \* \*

*1. Introduction*

Miguel Ruiz, Jr., appealed from a postjudgment order denying his petition for resentencing made pursuant to Penal Code section 1170.95 (section 1170.95), which was enacted as part of Senate Bill No. 1437 (2017-2018 Reg. Sess.) (Stats. 2018,

ch. 1015, §§ 2-4). The trial court had denied the petition on the ground that Senate Bill No. 1437 violated the California Constitution. We conclude Senate Bill No. 1437 is constitutional and therefore reverse with directions to consider the petition on the merits.

## 2. Background

In 1992, a jury found Ruiz guilty of first degree murder (Pen. Code, §§ 187, subd. (a), 189, subd. (a)) and found it to be true that he committed the murder for financial gain (*id.*, § 190.2, subd. (a)(1)). The trial court sentenced Ruiz to a term of life without the possibility of parole. A panel of this court affirmed the judgment against Ruiz and two other defendants in *People v. Clemmons* (Jan. 27, 1995, G014041, G013498) (nonpub. opn.), which sets out the underlying facts of this case.

In 2018, the Legislature enacted Senate Bill No. 1437, which limited accomplice liability under the felony murder rule and the natural and probable consequences doctrine by amending Penal Code sections 188 and 189. (See *People v. Solis* (2020) 46 Cal.App.5th 762, 768 (*Solis*); *People v. Cruz* (2020) 46 Cal.App.5th 740, 755 (*Cruz*).) Senate Bill No. 1437 also added section 1170.95 to create a procedure by which persons previously convicted of felony murder or murder under a natural and probable consequences theory may petition the superior court to have their murder convictions vacated and be resentenced if they could not now be convicted of murder under the amended versions of Penal Code sections 188 and 189. (*Solis, supra*, at p. 775; *Cruz, supra*, at p. 753.)

In April 2019, Ruiz filed a petition for resentencing pursuant to section 1170.95. He alleged that he had been convicted of murder pursuant to the felony murder rule or the natural and probable consequences doctrine and that he satisfied the other requirements for relief.

In November 2019, the trial court denied Ruiz's petition. The court concluded that Senate Bill No. 1437 violated article II, section 10, subdivision (c) of the California Constitution by materially amending Proposition 7, which was passed by the

electorate in 1978, and Proposition 115, which was passed by the electorate in 1990. The court declined to consider the petition on its merits. Ruiz timely appealed. Respondent has not appeared in this appeal.

3. *Analysis*

We conclude, as has every published opinion addressing the issue, that Senate Bill No. 1437 does not amend Proposition 7 or Proposition 115 and, therefore, does not violate the California Constitution. We reach our conclusion on the basis of the reasoning of *Solis, supra*, 46 Cal.App.5th at pages 769, 775-784 and *Cruz, supra*, 46 Cal.App.5th at pages 747, 754-761. We need not repeat the analysis of these cases and other cases to conclude that Senate Bill No. 1437 does not amend Proposition 7 or Proposition 115.

4. *Disposition*

The postjudgment order denying Ruiz's petition for resentencing pursuant to section 1170.95 is reversed and the matter is remanded to the trial court with directions to consider the merits of the petition.

FYBEL, J.

WE CONCUR:

ARONSON, ACTING P. J.

THOMPSON, J.